

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO USDOC WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 3327

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BRAZILIA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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FOR MEPD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, BEXP, NI

SUBJECT: EARLY WARNING: NIGERIA'S NEW CAPITAL

REF: LAGOS 1346, 1596

SUMMARY: AS REPORTED REFTELS, NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT (FMG)
RECENTLY MADE DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO MOVE FEDERAL CAPITAL
FROM LAGOS TO NEW FEDERAL TERRITORY IN CENTER OF COUNTRY IN
10-15 YEARS. FEW DETAILS AVAILABLE NOW, BUT PROSPECT OF
MASSIVE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OBVIOUSLY OF INTEREST WIDE
SPECTRUM OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY. TEXT THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS
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ESSENTIALS OF ALL THAT IS KNOWN TO DATE CONCERNING NEW CAPITAL.

IT OFFERED AS POTENTIAL ARTICLE FOR COMMERCE AMERICA, POST COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTERS AND DIRECT MAIL OR HANDOUT TO APPROPRIATE BUSINESS FIRMS. SUCH FIRMS SHOULD BE WARNED THAT VISITS TO NIGERIA SOLELY TO GATHER DETAILS OF THE PROJECT ARE PREMATURE AT THIS TIME, SINCE FEW DETAILS HAVE BEEN DECIDED. END SUMMARY.

1. NIGERIA'S GENERAL MURTALA MUHAMMED, HEAD OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT, ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 3 THAT THE NATION'S CAPITAL WOULD IN THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS BE MOVED FROM CONGESTED LAGOS TO A NEW 3200-SQUARE-MILE FEDERAL TERRITORY IN THE CENTER OF NIGERIA. HE SAID CONSTRUCTION WOULD START WITHIN FOUR YEARS.

2. SUBSEQUENTLY, A GOVERNMENT DECREE OF FEBRUARY 5 IDENTIFIED THE FEDERAL TERRITORY AS AN UNDEVELOPED RURAL AREA JUST SOUTH OF ABUJA, IN THE SOUTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE NEW NIGER STATE, ONE OF SEVEN NEW NIGERIAN STATES CREATED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE NEW CAPITAL ANNOUNCEMENT. ON EXISTING NIGERIAN MAPS, NIGER STATE IS THE LOWER HALF OF NORTHWESTERN STATE.

3. A FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY HEADED BY A CHAIRMAN WITH CABINET RANK WILL BE NAMED TO CHOOSE A CAPITAL CITY SITE AND PREPARE A MASTER PLAN FOR THE TERRITORY. IT WILL ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS, ROADS, RAILROADS, WATER SUPPLY AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE. AT PRESENT THE TERRITORY IS CROSSED BY A SECONDARY ROAD BUT HAS VIRTUALLY NO OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE.

4. REMOVAL OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL FROM LAGOS WAS RECOMMENDED BY A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE WHICH VISITED THE CAPITALS OF AUSTRALIA, BOTSWANA, BRAZIL, INDIA, KENYA AND TANZANIA.

5. AS THE MOST POPULOUS NATION IN AFRICA, NIGERIA WILL REQUIRE A FAIRLY SIZEABLE CAPITAL CITY WHICH MUST BE CREATED FROM VIRGIN TERRITORY. THE NEW CAPITAL PROJECT THUS SEEMS TO OFFER LUCRATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN PLANNING, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION FIRMS. DETAILS OF THE PROJECT WILL BE REPORTED AS THEY DEVELOP.
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